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SUBJECT: USAU: UNECA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DISCUSSES DONOR  
SUPPORT FOR AU, UNECA

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: USAU Ambassador Battle and Under Secretary General Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), affirmed the partnership between the USG and the UN system in support of African development priorities. Janneh shared information about two upcoming fora for coordination and information sharing among donors, the African Union (AU) and UNECA. The first of these is an informal "think tank" created for select Ambassadors from donor countries to exchange ideas with Janneh and AU Deputy Commissioner Erastus Mwencha. The second is the Donor Support Group, scheduled for December 1-3. Janneh also shared his views on key priorities for donor support to the AU and UNECA, including advancing intra-regional African trade, and efforts to address climate change and development. END SUMMARY.

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AU/UNECA "THINK TANK"  
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12. (SBU) On November 2, USAU Ambassador Battle and USAID African Union (AU) Desk Officer called on the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Abdoulie Janneh. Janneh's Chief of Staff, Adeyemi Dipeolu, was also present. The first issue discussed was a newly-formed "think tank," to meet later in the week, comprised of select Ambassadors and representatives from donor nations, AU Deputy Commissioner Mwencha, and Janneh. The purpose of the group is to generate ideas to help the AU and UNECA improve institutional performance. Similar meetings were held to assist the AU in developing its strategic plan, and were valuable in providing an informal setting for Mwencha and Janneh to brainstorm with donor country ambassadors on issues that impact the AU and UNECA. Janneh indicated that the initial "think tank" meeting would have a loose agenda to allow for a free exchange of ideas.

13. (SBU) Janneh said that the AU is "gaining credibility by the day" with the regional integration agenda coming together and Africans beginning to transcend their differences and speak with one voice on key issues. He noted the partnership between the AU and UNECA, indicating that while the AU has been forced to focus on crises, UNECA has provided a high level of capacity in social and economic affairs. He stressed that while UNECA is a UN institution, it is also "Africa" and shares the same program as the AU.

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DONOR SUPPORT GROUP  
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14. (SBU) On the subject of the Donor Support Group meeting, to take place December 1-3, Janneh noted that a team is in place to organize the event and the agenda is virtually set. To begin, the AU will provide an overview of its strategy.

In turn, UNECA will present its business plan and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will present an integrated, continent-wide agenda. AU Commissioners will be available for a question and answer session. Meeting organizers seek donor participation at the policy decision-making level. Locally-based, technical staff are expected to manage the implementation of any commitments made. The AU strategy, UNECA business plan, and budgets for both organizations will be available in advance to allow donors to study them and reach decisions regarding support. Janneh indicated that support would be sought across the full spectrum of the strategic plan, but that pledges of funding are not expected at the meeting, in most cases. Instead, program areas will be developed and described, and donors can then commit to aligning around them. Janneh cited the area of trade as an example; participants might consider the question of how to support the AU and RECs to increase access to global markets and intra-African trade.

¶5. (SBU) In discussing how funding would be provided, Janneh explained that the AU's total budget is projected at USD 784 million over four years, a portion of which member states will contribute. Donor support will be sought for the remaining funds needed. From the AU's perspective, support ideally would be made available through a common fund with a proportion of resources left flexible and untied. Janneh acknowledged the financing restrictions that donors face, and registered his hope that donors unable to provide budgetary support would indicate the reasons. To support the AU, UNECA will seek funds to cover any gaps in reaching a targeted budget of USD 100 million over three years. Looking at the ongoing process that hopefully will result from the Donor

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Support Group meeting, a donors-only group is working on terms of reference for membership. (Janneh expects that the name will change to the "Partner Support Group.") Criteria could include a minimum commitment to support the AU or UNECA, for example USD 300,000 per year, to be established by the donors.

¶6. (SBU) Expanding upon areas in which donors might productively engage with the AU and UNECA, Janneh highlighted climate change and intra-regional trade. To date, UNECA has done substantial work with the AU and the African Development Bank to set up the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), which centralizes climate change information. On trade, the AU and UNECA are trying to push a common voice in negotiations, while the RECs will implement trade agreements.  
AMBASSADOR MICHAEL A. BATTLE  
MUSHINGI